

# Existing Land Use

*Developing a baseline analysis of current land uses for City planning efforts*

## 4.1 Introduction

**A**n analysis of the built environment is fundamental to long range city planning. Population and employment levels are reflected in the amount of existing residential, commercial, and industrial land uses. As population and employment change, so will development within the City. The baseline analysis of existing land use included in this chapter is an important step in developing policies that determine the character and content of Round Rock in the future.

The built environment is best described through an inventory of existing structures and land by specific categories of use. This chapter identifies ten land use categories and tabulates acreage for the entire City. A similar measurement is also made for ten zoning classifications. A comparison between the acreage of the major land use categories and the corresponding zoning districts reveals the extent to which the zoned land has been developed. Map 4.1 depicts existing land use and is located at the end of this chapter.

Since issues addressed in this chapter overlap and intertwine with other sections of the General Plan 2000, the reader is advised to look at the Plan as an integrated whole. Unless otherwise noted, references to current data reflect information collected for the year 1998 and cover the Planning Area as defined in Chapter 1. This includes both the area within the present city limits and Round Rock's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ).

Including roadway and railroad right-of-way, the area within the present city limits encompasses 23 square miles. The Planning Area, which includes the ETJ, encompasses approximately 70 square miles. Round Rock's dominant land use is residential. Single-family residential use comprises over 18 percent, or 8,047 acres, of all land. Commercial development comprises approximately 2.6 percent, or 1,169 acres. While some of the remaining vacant land within the Planning Area will remain undeveloped due to various physical constraints (e.g., floodplain, aquifer, slope, etc.), it is estimated that at least 75 percent of all vacant land, or 13,039 acres, is available for development.

The following are some general characteristics of Round Rock's existing land use pattern:

- ◆ Single-family developments account for over 23 percent of the land use within the corporate limits and approximately eighteen percent within the Planning Area. The majority of single-family land use is located south of Brushy Creek. A substantial number of large lot subdivisions are located in northwest Round Rock.
- ◆ The community's most intensively developed arterials include: Interstate 35; Ranch-to-Market (RM) 620; Sam Bass Road; Palm Valley Boulevard; Gattis School Road; Louis Henna Boulevard; and McNeil Road. In general, commercial, retail, and related services are located along the frontage of these roads. There is very little residential land use adjacent to the relatively newer roads such as Interstate 35 and RM 620. However, residential uses do abut such long established roads as Sam Bass Road, Palm Valley Boulevard, Gattis School Road, and McNeil Road.
- ◆ In general, multi-family developments are evenly dispersed throughout the City.
- ◆ Approximately 66 percent of the acreage within the city limits is developed. Within the Planning Area, approximately 35 percent of the acreage is developed.
- ◆ Several major roads into the City have substantial undeveloped areas adjacent to them. This provides opportunities for future land use planning. Farm-to-Market (FM)1431/Chandler Road, portions of FM 3406/Old Settlers Boulevard, and portions of FM 1325/Louis Henna Boulevard have large tracts of vacant land adjacent to them.
- ◆ Land uses tend to be segregated by major arterials and highways.
- ◆ The oldest single-family developments occur in or near the downtown area.
- ◆ Three industrial areas take advantage of the available railroad service in Round Rock: (1) along Chisholm Trail on the Georgetown line; (2) the junction of the Georgetown line and the Union Pacific line east of Interstate 35; and (3) along the Union Pacific line in the downtown area.

- ◆ One of the original entryways into Round Rock, Mays Street, has a substantial amount of older commercial development along it, especially adjacent to the downtown area. The north end of Mays Street exhibits more recent commercial development and less residential land use adjacent to it.
- ◆ Three notable professional office developments include: (1) Old Town Square located north of RM 620, between Chisholm Trail and Interstate 35; (2) the Highland Professional Building on South Mays Street; and (3) Crystal Park located at the corner of North Mays Street and Old Settlers Boulevard.
- ◆ Round Rock has one golf course located in the Forest Creek development on the east side of the City.
- ◆ The newly developed area east of Interstate 35 and along Louis Henna Boulevard contains the largest concentration of retail land uses. This area is one of the fastest growing in Round Rock.
- ◆ Most industrial land uses are located in the northern portion of the City.
- ◆ Multi-family developments are increasing in the southern portion of the City, closer to both major employers and north Austin.

## 4.2 Land Use Inventory

In order to fully analyze and understand existing land use patterns in Round Rock, a parcel specific land use inventory was conducted and mapped by the Planning and Community Development Department in December 1998. The analysis within this chapter and the Existing Land Use Map (Map 4.1) illustrate the results of the inventory.

The 1998 existing land use inventory delineates ten land uses:

- ◆ Single-family    ◆ Commercial    ◆ Institutional    ◆ Agricultural
- ◆ Two-family    ◆ Industrial    ◆ Vacant    ◆ Right-of-way
- ◆ Multi-family    ◆ Parks & Open

With the exception of right-of-way, the land uses fall into six general categories as shown in Table 4.1, Land Use Categories. Right-of-way is defined as the right one landowner grants to another to pass over the land, construct a roadway, or use as a pathway without actually transferring ownership.

## 4.3 Land Use Categories

Listed below are descriptions and examples of land uses that appear on the Existing Land Use Map (Map 4.1). For residential uses, maximum densities are shown. The examples of associated development are permitted principal uses for the City's existing zoning district categories.

**Table 4.1 Land Use Categories**

<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Example</i>
<b>Residential</b>	
Single-family Detached (1-5 dwelling units/ acre)	Single-family house, semi-rural residence with crops or pastures
Two-family (5-6 dwelling units/acre)	Duplex
Multi-family (maximum 20 dwelling units/acre)	Apartment, condominium, four-plex
<b>Commercial</b>	
General Commercial	Offices, services, retail, amusements, government, institutional, commercial, places of worship, and other non-industrial activities, but no outdoor storage
Local Commercial (low to medium intensity)	Offices, neighborhood services, government, institutional, daycare facilities, schools, and other commercial and retail activities conducted within an enclosed building
Historic Commercial	All general commercial uses excluding various automotive uses
<b>Industrial</b>	
General Industrial	Light industry which entails unenclosed operations or storage, and heavy industry with limited external effects
Industrial Park	Light industry with no outdoor storage
<b>Parks, Open Space &amp; Parkland or Open Space</b>	
Golf course	City/private parks, cemeteries, conservation areas, outdoor recreational facilities, and wildlife sanctuaries
	Public or private golf course, country club
<b>Public &amp; Institutional</b>	
Government	Government office and publicly-owned City facilities
School	Public or private schools and the surrounding grounds
Institutional	Hospital, nursing home, group home, and housing authority
Church & Cemetery	Religious institutions, cemeteries
<b>Vacant</b>	
Vacant	Land containing no structures or activities
Agriculture	Rural lands containing crops or pastures

Table 4.2, below, compares current land use with data from the 1990 General Plan. It is important to note that the current Planning Area defined herein differs from that of the 1990 General Plan. ETJ acquisitions over the past ten years have increased the Planning Area beyond what was defined in the 1990 Plan. While this may affect comparisons between the two time periods, the figures for each plan are consistent to their respective totals.

Unlike other information in this chapter, the land uses shown in Table 4.2 are listed to coincide with the 1990 General Plan land use descriptions. This is to facilitate a comparative analysis between the two plans. For example, institutional land use as described in Table 4.2 includes hospitals, nursing homes, group homes, and housing authority properties. It does not include schools, government offices, and churches as outlined in Table 4.1. In Table 4.2, these uses have been broken out to easily compare data between the 1990 General Plan and the General Plan 2000.

**Table 4.2 Land Uses by Acreage, 1990/1998**

<i>Land Use</i>	<b>1990 General Plan</b>			<b>Existing Land Use</b>		
	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percentage of Developed Acres</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Acreage</i>	<i>Acres</i>	<i>Percentage of Developed Acres</i>	<i>Percentage of Total Acreage</i>
Single-family	1,881	34.0%	15.3%	8,047	49.2%	18.2%
Two-family	159	2.9%	1.3%	176	1.1%	0.4%
Multi-family	140	2.5%	1.1%	246	1.5%	0.6%
Commercial	353	6.4%	2.9%	1169	7.1%	2.6%
Industrial	441	8.0%	3.6%	783	4.8%	1.8%
Government	38	0.7%	0.3%	64	0.4%	0.1%
School	167	3.0%	1.4%	393	2.4%	0.9%
Church & cemetery	164	3.0%	1.3%	131	0.8%	0.3%
Institutional <sup>1</sup>	-	-	-	174	1.1%	0.4%
Parkland	822	14.9%	6.7%	1,008	6.2%	2.3%
ROW	1,356	24.6%	10.9%	4,170	25.4%	9.4%
<b>Developed Acres</b>	<b>5,521</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	44.8%	<b>16,361</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	37.0%
Agriculture <sup>2</sup>	-		-	10,554		23.8%
Vacant <sup>3</sup>	6,810		55.2%	17,385		39.2%
<b>Total Acres</b>	<b>12,331</b>		<b>100.0 %</b>	<b>44,300</b>		<b>100.0%</b>

<sup>1</sup> No information available for the 1990 General Plan.

<sup>2</sup> No information available for the 1990 General Plan.

<sup>3</sup> Includes land with development constraints.

## 4.4 Land Use Analysis

The predominant land use in Round Rock is residential. By adding the acreage of the three residential categories together and dividing by the number of developed acres, Table 4.2 reveals that 52 percent of developed acreage contains housing of which 95 percent is single-family residential. By comparison in 1990, 39 percent of the developed acreage contained housing of which 86 percent was single-family residential.

Between 1990 and 1998, the proportion of single-family development increased relative to total residential development in Round Rock. The amount of two-family and multi-family development steadily decreased since 1990. The two-family share of total developed land decreased from 2.9 percent in 1990 to 1.1 percent in 1998. Multi-family development dropped from 2.5 percent of total developed land in 1990 to 1.5 percent in 1998.

The proportion of industrial land to total developed land decreased significantly. In 1990, eight percent of the developed land contained an industrial land use. In 1998, that figure dropped to approximately 4.8 percent. Some important facts to consider when analyzing the industrial figures are:

- ◆ In the mid-1980s, several large industrial sites were developed but not leased. These once vacant properties are becoming utilized as the City experiences new demand for industrial properties. Hence, the total acreage devoted to new industrial sites is relatively modest.
- ◆ Several major industrial firms expanded their operations in the 1990's without necessarily purchasing additional property. Unless the firms purchased additional property, industrial expansion is not reflected in the land use acreage calculations. Some of the large companies that expanded during this period include SYSCO Corporation, Cypress Semiconductor, Tellabs Texas, Inc., McNeil Consumer Products, AMP, Westinghouse/TECO, and Dupont Photomasks.
- ◆ Commercial land use increased its proportion of total developed lands as the industrial percentage decreased. In the last five years, the strong response of the commercial sector to market forces outpaced industrial development. Furthermore, the largest employer in the City, Dell Computer Corporation, is classified as a commercial land use despite its close connections to industry.

Another notable land use category worthy of examination is parkland. Currently, the existing percentage of land dedicated to parks and open space exceeds national standards. In Table 4.3, it is clear that the existing amount of parkland and open space falls well within the recommended

National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard, even when the 440 acre Old Settlers Park is excluded. Old Settlers Park is excluded in order to evaluate only neighborhood and community parks in terms of the national standard.

The NRPA recommends a range of 6 to 10.5 acres of developed parkland for every 1000 residents.

**Table 4.3 Parkland and Open Space  
of Developed Land, 1998**

	<i>Parkland and Open Space in Acres per 1,000 Residents<sup>1</sup></i>
All Parks and Open Space	13.6
Neighborhood and Community Parks <sup>2</sup>	7.7

<sup>1</sup> Assumes a Planning Area population of 73,935.

<sup>2</sup> Excludes Old Settlers Park at approximately 439 acres.

Generally, parkland and open space are evenly dispersed in areas where most of the City's development activity has occurred. With a low population density, northwest Round Rock has few parks and contains most of the City's vacant land. Further analysis of parkland is included in Chapter 6, Community Facilities, and Chapter 8, Parks and Open Space Plan.

The amount of vacant land exceeds single-family development in both the city limits and the ETJ. In fact, the amount of vacant land use actually *increases* relative to the total amount of land in 1998. The amount of vacant land within the Planning Area registered 55.2 percent in 1990 (Table 4.2). In 1998, this figure reached 63 percent. The increase can be explained through the annexation of undeveloped land and ETJ acquisitions. If one compares the ratio between developed acres and the total amount of land between 1990 and 1998, it appears that development in the current Planning Area lags behind expansion by approximately seventeen percent.

The substantial increase in vacant land is one reason it is important to periodically revise the General Plan. Opportunities for future land use direction in these areas are numerous. Chapter 5, Future Land Use, addresses these opportunities.

## 4.5 Zoning Inventory and Analysis

An analysis of current land use and zoning can help the City ensure a balance between the amount of land zoned for a particular land use category and the acreage that currently supports the corresponding land

use. At present, Round Rock is separated into eleven zoning district classifications. The measurement of zoning acreage is not an exact representation of land use for the following reasons:

- ◆ Institutional uses, such as schools, churches, or government facilities, may be located in a variety of zoning districts. For example, the zoned acreage calculated for a single-family/standard lot district may include a school site. Parkland may also be found in several zoning districts.
- ◆ Land with development constraints, such as flood-prone areas or areas with steep topography, is included in all zoning calculations.
- ◆ Technically, zoning extends to the centerline of all street rights-of-way. However, the effective zoned acreage is necessarily less than the total area within the city limits because rights-of-way cannot contain development.
- ◆ A Planned Unit Development (PUD) may include a variety of different land uses. For example, a particular PUD may include local commercial, single-family, and multi-family uses.

The following data apply only to areas zoned by the City. The City does not have zoning jurisdiction over the entire Planning Area. Therefore, all land use figures in the following analysis are calculated for the city limits only.

In Table 4.4, ten zoning classifications are defined. The eleventh classification, Open Space, is excluded from the analysis since it covers primarily one property, Old Settlers Park. Acreage figures are calculated for each defined classification. In addition, the zoning categories are correlated with the corresponding land use categories except in the case of PUDs. As stated previously, PUDs may include a variety of land uses



**Table 4.4 1998 Land Use and Zoning Acreage<sup>1</sup>**

<i>Zoning Classification</i>	<i>Land Use Category</i>	<i>Land Use Acreage</i>	<i>Percent of Land Use Acreage</i>	<i>Zoned Acreage</i>	<i>Percentage of Zoned Acreage</i>
<b>SF-1</b> Single-family, large lot	<b>Single-family</b>	3,505	23.3%	539	3.6%
<b>SF-2</b> Single-family, standard lot				6,103	40.9%
<b>TF</b> Two-family Residential	<b>Two-family</b>	167	1.1%	463	3.1%
<b>MF</b> Multi-family Residential	<b>Multi-family</b>	246	1.6%	486	3.3%
<b>C-1</b> General Commercial	<b>Commercial</b>	1,048	7.0%	1,878	12.6%
<b>C-2</b> Local Commercial				39	0.3%
<b>C-3</b> Historic Commercial				26	0.2%
<b>I-1</b> General Industrial	<b>Industrial</b>	672	4.5%	1,897	12.7%
<b>I-2</b> Industrial Park				169	1.1%
<b>PUD<sup>2</sup></b> Planned Unit Development	<b>PUD<sup>2</sup></b>	-	-	3,327	22.2%
Total <sup>3</sup>		15,059		14,927	100.0%

<sup>1</sup> Land use inventory of city limits.

<sup>2</sup> Not a land use category. The associated data represent several land use categories, such as single-family, commercial, etc.

<sup>3</sup> Land use total includes acreage for institutional (541), parkland (931), ROW (2,418), agricultural (607) and vacant (4,924) land uses.

Mirroring the land use figures, single-family zoning dominates all other zoning classifications in Round Rock. Within the city limits, approximately 45 percent of all zoned land is either single-family/large lot or single family/standard lot. However, it is estimated that only 23 percent of the

City's existing developed acreage supports single-family land use. The discrepancy between these figures may be explained by the fact that most institutional uses, such as schools, churches, and parkland occur in residentially zoned areas. When accounting for these areas, the amount of single-family use increases to 33 percent, more representative of the 45 percent zoned. Despite the relatively large amount of land zoned for single-family use, this figure represents a nineteen percent decrease in the amount of land zoned single-family between 1990 and 1998.

The decrease in land zoned for residential development is more dramatic when analyzing both two-family and multi-family acreage. Between 1990 and 1998, the amount of land zoned for two-family use declined 48 percent. Multi-family acreage decreased by 34 percent.

When analyzing these figures, it is important to note that the Planning Area defined in the General Plan 2000 is approximately seventeen percent larger than the Planning Area defined in the 1990 General Plan. An apparent decrease of land zoned residential over that ten-year period could simply be the result of a larger Planning Area. In order to get a better idea of zoning changes, Table 4.5 examines the net gain of residential zoned acreage between 1990 and 1998.

**Table 4.5 Residential Zoning Changes 1990-1998**

	<i>Total Acreage 1990</i>	<i>New acreage through annexation</i>	<i>Acres gained from another classification</i>	<i>Loss of acres to another classification</i>	<i>Net Gain</i>	<i>Percent Change in Acreage</i>
SF-1 & SF-2	5,391	1,319	25	94	1,250	23%
Two-family	478	1	19	35	-15	-3%
Multi-family	430	78	39	62	56	13%

Zoning acreage devoted to single-family use increased dramatically in relation to the two-family and multi-family figures. When analyzing the total acreage for each zoning classification, single-family zoning increased over 23 percent during the last ten years. Two-family zoning decreased by three percent while multi-family zoning increased by thirteen percent.

The following table illustrates the percentage of zoned land that currently supports the land use for which it is zoned.

**Table 4.6 1998 Land Use / Zoning Comparison**

<b>ZONING &amp; Land Use Categories</b>	<i>Existing Land Use Acreage*</i>	<i>Existing Zoning Acreage</i>	<i>Percentage of Zoned Land Utilized</i>
<b>SF-1 &amp; SF-2</b> Single-family	3,505	6,642	52.8%
<b>TF</b> Two-family	167	463	36.1%
<b>MF</b> Multi-family	246	486	50.6%
<b>COM</b> Commercial & Retail	1,048	1,943	53.9%
<b>IND</b> Industrial	672	2,066	32.5%

\* Land use calculations for city limits only.

The analysis displays that approximately half of the land within the city limits currently supports a use for which it is zoned. The remaining 50 percent of land is primarily vacant with the exception of nonconforming uses within various zones. Vacant land is most prevalent in the single-family/standard lot (1,525 acres), general commercial (651 acres), and general industrial (1,173 acres) zoning districts.

## 4.6 Summary

Prior to determining what policies and standards Round Rock should consider to accommodate projected growth, the City must determine a desired general land use pattern for the next decade. The data and analysis included in this chapter can help direct this pattern. In Chapter 5, Future Land Use, this information is coupled with citizen input to create a broad-brush scenario to help guide future land use decisions. Once a pattern is agreed upon and adopted, the City can determine what modifications, if any, must be made to existing development regulations. Appropriate development regulations should help Round Rock achieve the desired character and land use pattern envisioned by the community.



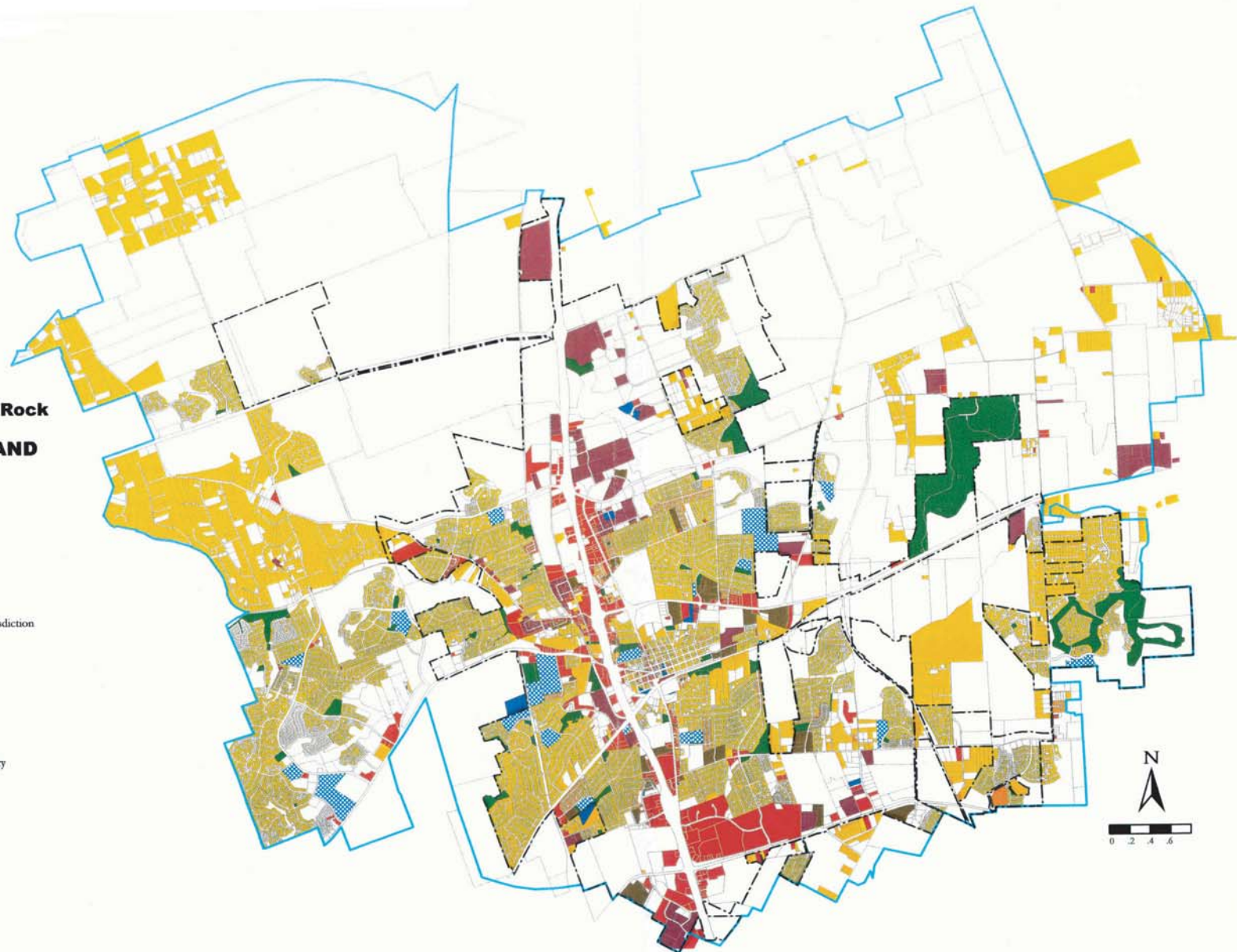
**City of  
Round Rock**

## EXISTING LAND USE MAP

### LEGEND

- Parcels
- City Limits
- Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

- Single-Family
- Recreational
- Government
- Commercial
- Church & Cemetery
- Industrial
- Multi-Family
- Two-Family
- Right-of-Way
- Railroad
- School
- Vacant
- Agriculture



**MAP 4.1**